



**Testimony in Support of HB 5330**  
**Testimony by Citizens Campaign for the Environment**  
**Louis W. Burch, Program Coordinator**

**March 14, 2014**  
**Hartford, CT**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, distinguished members of the CGA Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Louis Burch, program coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). Supported by over 80,000 members in Connecticut and New York State, CCE works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment. CCE would like to offer the following testimony in support of HB 5330:

**HB 5330- AAC The application of pesticides to parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and municipal greens**

CCE strongly supports this legislation, and applauds the Public Health Committee for its efforts to prohibit the use of dangerous chemical pesticides on all municipal parks and playing fields in Connecticut. It is well documented that exposure to pesticides increases a child's risk of developing a range of neurological, respiratory and endocrine disorders. Long-term exposure to pesticides has also been linked to a variety of cancers, including non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Connecticut established itself as a nationwide leader on this critical issue, by passing a prohibition on the use of dangerous aesthetic pesticides on elementary school playing fields in 2005.

The K-6 pesticide ban was expanded in 2007 to include middle schools, and again in 2009 to include day care facilities. The gradual expansion of this policy demonstrates a growing body of knowledge among the health sciences community and the CT General Assembly around this serious children's health issue. Since these laws have been implemented, several communities throughout the state have successfully eliminated the use of toxic pesticides on school playing fields, and a number have gone above and beyond what is prescribed by the law by prohibiting toxic pesticides on all public green spaces and playing fields.

While the ban on pesticides for K-8 schools was an important first step, it fails to protect students on public parks and playing fields, where children's exposure rates are high. Heavy physical

activities such as sports and exercise lead to heavy breathing, which can also increase a young person's risk of inhaling toxic pesticides.

Effective and affordable alternatives to pesticides do exist and are widely available. There is clear science showing that pests and weeds can not only be managed successfully with readily available and affordable non-toxic alternatives, but that towns and school districts that eliminate the use of chemical pesticides can also benefit from long-term financial savings. **Citizens Campaign for the Environment strongly supports expanding existing state law to prohibit the use of toxic pesticides on public parks and playing fields in Connecticut, and respectfully urges this committee to pass this important legislation as soon as possible.**

On behalf of our members in Connecticut, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and look forward to working with you on this important issue.